



About Karen

In November 2011, the citizens of Gary, Indiana chose a new day for the city by electing Karen Freeman Wilson as the for Mayor. When she is inaugurated on December 31, 2011, Freeman-Wilson will become the first woman to lead the steel city and the first African-American female mayor in the State of Indiana.

Often comparing herself to Dorothy from Oz, Freeman-Wilson has been asked to render counsel on various matters throughout the United States and other parts of the world, but she often quips that “there is no place like home.” Along with her husband Carmen Wilson and their daughter Jordan, Freeman-Wilson resides in her native city of Gary, Indiana. She was valedictorian of her graduating class at Gary’s storied Roosevelt High School and went on to become an honors graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

Despite her breadth of travel and influence throughout the United States, Freeman-Wilson’s loyalty and commitment to her home city has never wavered. Indeed, her passion for Gary, coupled with her experience and training, have positioned her for leadership and prepared her to tackle the major challenges facing the city. She is the immediate past CEO of The National Association of Drug Court Professionals and Executive Director of The National Drug Court Institute based in Washington, D.C. With Freeman-Wilson at the helm, the number of drug courts in the U.S. doubled to 1700 and NADCP became the premier organizational advocate for drug treatment in the judicial arena. Freeman-Wilson has consulted with the Office of White House Drug Control Policy, the Department of Justice and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in the creation and implementation of drug policy. As the twice-elected Gary City Judge, she helped pioneer the drug court movement in Indiana.

Freeman-Wilson has also demonstrated public service and leadership in state government. During her tenure as Indiana Attorney General, Freeman-Wilson fought passionately on behalf of youth, seniors and abused nursing home patients. She was one of the first Attorneys General in the country to combat gas price gouging and to ensure that tobacco settlement dollars were directed towards smoking cessation and health care. While she was the Executive Director of The Indiana Civil Rights Commission, Indiana was one of the first states to pass legislation comparable to the American with Disabilities Act.

Her capabilities, intellect and stellar record of success have not gone unnoticed by national party leaders. In 2000, she was named as one of the top 100 to watch by the National Democratic Leadership Council. That was followed with the honor of being asked to address the 2000 National Democratic Convention in Los Angeles. Her contributions have also been acknowledged by U.S. Drug Czars, Indiana Governors and Supreme Court Justices throughout the United States.

When asked about her commitment to her hometown, Freeman-Wilson often acknowledges that Gary has a history of many obstacles, but quickly notes that the city’s challenges pale in comparison to its potential. “Our city is a diamond in the rough and we simply need the right leadership.” Gary citizens and members of the local media seem confident that Freeman-Wilson will provide the visionary leadership to distinguish Gary as a beacon in Northwest Indiana.

About Gary

The 19th Century started by marking Gary, Indiana as the City of the Century. This humble town seated at the foot of Lake Michigan was viewed by its founders, some of the wealthiest industrialist in the world, as the perfect place to build and invest in the newest center of steel and oil production in the world. Home to the world's first billion dollar corporation, Gary, Indiana became the engine that fueled America's century year old dominance in manufacturing.

It was from this great vision and foundation sprang forth noble achievement in modernizing education (William Wirt), early advances in the founding of modern aviation (Octave Chanute) and the fuel for an industrial revolution that forever changed the course architecture, construction and development throughout the world.

Even today, fueled by the mass production of Gary and Northwest Indiana, the State of Indiana still ranks as the largest manufacturing state in the union and the seventh (7th) largest manufacturing economy in the world. Gary Works!

As the last century proved pivotal in terms of Gary's role in global trade, commerce, education, engineering and innovation, we believe the 20th Century hold just as much promise.

It is our vision that the future of Gary rests in the tremendous transportation assets that remain as the legacy of our industrial and manufacturing dominance. With three (3) Class 1 railroads, access to four (4) interstate highways, lakefront ports and an international class airport, we believe the next 100 years for Gary will be just as promising as the last. In short, we believe Gary, Indiana will be the next major transportation gateway to North America and the world.

We are prepared to invest heavily in our airport, our lakeshores and will soon form strategic partnerships with our rail, trucking and logistics firms who will serve as the fountain head of thousands of jobs and an increased quality of life for all. Today we have successfully launched an over \$150MM project to expand our runway at the Gary / Chicago International Airport. We have equally initiated over \$30MM worth of investments into our historic lakefront. This is just the beginning. To do this, we recognize that will take a sincere and mutually beneficial relationship with both the leaders of our state and our friends in the Chicago metropolitan service area to make this vision a reality. We stand ready for this challenge and ask those who are sincerely interested and equally motivated to join us in marking a new history for our city, the region,